

## LIVING GREEN

## Go solar and sell electricity to the government

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For The Sudbury Star

Grasshopper Solar, a Canadian company that delivers turnkey solar power solutions for the Ontario Power Authority's (OPA) FIT and microFIT program, has landed itself permanently in Sudbury, and the results couldn't be better.

The Toronto-based company broke ground in the North last August, with its installation of a ground-mounted solar power system in Copper Cliff. And the system is doing well.

"It's going fantastic," said Grasshopper CEO, Azeem Qureshi.

"It's in the ground and there are no issues with it."

OPA's Feed-in Tariff (FIT) Program, for renewable energy in Ontario, is intended to encourage the development of renewable energy products across the province. Working with local land and business owners, Grasshopper Solar is aware that solar power systems are the way to go in building Ontario to be one of the world leaders in the renewable energy sector.

"The way it works is you put the system in your backyard or on your roof. There are two different rates that the government pays," said Qureshi.

"All the electricity that is generated by the system is sold back to the grid. You don't use any of it yourself."

Since we buy electricity at a cheaper rate, you are better off selling it to the government instead of using it. That is how you profit from the program.

Currently, for a ground mounted unit, the government is paying you 64.2 cents per kilowatt hour, and for a rooftop system, 80.2 cents. This means: a typical residential-sized rooftop, with a 3.5 kilowatt system, would produce around 5,000 kilowatt hours per year, with an annual return of roughly \$4,000 from the government. This would go on as long as your contract permits.

The company recently hired four sales representatives in Sudbury to cover the North, and are looking for more to keep up with the demand. In fact, there are 22 other systems getting ready to be installed in Sudbury and the surrounding areas. They are just waiting for final approval.

The company is hoping to enlarge their energy portfolio across all markets, including residential, commercial, insti-



Sudbury Star file photo

Angle and Murray Fischer installing the first ground-mounted solar power system in Sudbury.

tutional, industrial and rural areas.

There is no obligation with OPA, so if you go ahead and fill out an application for the program, it won't cost you a thing. There will be no penalties if you choose not to install.

"People are still learning, still getting to know the program and how it all works," said Qureshi.

"What they can do is call us and we just process their application for free. They can go with any other installers, but we get them in line (with OPA) and that way it is not a hassle for them

later on."

For more information on OPA, the FIT and microFIT programs, or Grasshopper Solar, visit their website at [www.grasshoppersolar.com](http://www.grasshoppersolar.com) or call 1-866-908-3150.